

Appl. No. 10/663629  
Reply to Office action of June 29, 2004

### REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested. Applicants appreciate the courtesy shown by the Examiner in discussing this application with the undersigned. The discussions are reflected in the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1-6, and 8-23 are pending.

An editorial revision has been made in claim 10, to clarify that the acicular particles of claim 10 are not related to the columnar structure of crystal grains recited in claim 1. Rather, the acicular particles are illustrated, for example, as the elements 30 in Fig. 9. In this embodiment, the acicular particles can form conductive bridges between portions of the metal crystal grains 32 that otherwise might be isolated.

Claims 1 and 16 were rejected as indefinite. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Those of skill in the art would be able to understand the columnar crystal grain structure of claims 1 and 16, an example of which is illustrated in Fig. 8A. Applicants submit that the term is used commonly in this field, as exemplified by US 5,378,548 (copy attached for ease of reference). See the Abstract and Col. 20, lines 23-24.

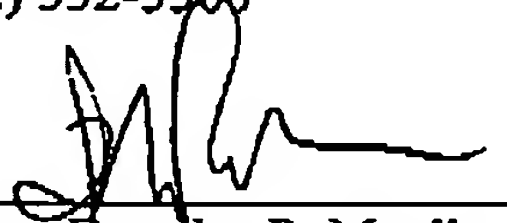
Favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if any issues remain.

Respectfully Submitted,

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By

  
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